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ABSTRACT

Ninety-three higher adult education chief administrators served as subjects in this study which was designed to test whether or not there was evidence of increased professionalization between 1957 and 1967. Utilizing Hall's Professionalization Scales and some background scales to measure attitudinal and structural attributes of professionalization, an analysis of variance technique and a chi square analysis were used to determine the difference between the extent of professionalization of three groups of administrators. Findings revealed no significant change over time between the three groups at the .05 significance level. The average scores in this study were higher than those reported in previous studies using the Professionalization Scales with other occupations. These unexpected findings were viewed as attributable, at least in part, to characteristics of the field of higher adult education during the past decade which mitigated against further professionalization of the occupation. Using a supplementary questionnaire, additional comparisons were made between 93 respondents and a sample of the 143 non-respondents to the initial questionnaire. Differences were not significant. (author/pt)

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PROFESSIONALIZATION IN HIGHER ADULT EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

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This paper is based upon research conducted by the author for a doctoral dissertation at Teachers College, Columbia University, under the sponsorship of Alan B. Knox.

ABSTRACT

Ninety-three higher adult education chief administrators served as subjects in this study which was designed to test whether or not there was evidence of increased professionalization between 1957 and 1967. Utilizing Hall's Professionalization Scales and some background scales to measure attitudinal and structural attributes of professionalization, an analysis of variance technique and a chi square analysis were used to determine the difference between the extent of professionalization of three cohorts of Ss. Findings revealed no significant change over time between the three

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BACKGROUND

During the past two decades the literature on higher adult education administration has indicated considerable concern about the extent of professionalization in the occupation. In 1957 a meeting of university adult education administrators was held in Chicago on the topic: "Evening College and Extension Administration as a Profession." Following this meeting, the Winter issue of Adult Education (1) had as its major theme the professionalization of adult educators in general, with two articles specifically on the professionalization of higher adult education administrators. These articles reported discussions of the topic at the Chicago meeting and have provided an excellent orientation and baseline for the present study. It was reported that a minority of deans and directors expressed opposition to increased professionalization, while the majority viewed such professionalization favorably. Carey summarized the meeting by quoting Howard McClusky. When asked whether evening and extension administration was a profession, he replied, "Not yet, but

we're moving in that direction." (1:80)

Since 1957 there have been a number of pleas (9:10) for further professionalization of the occupation. In addition, researchers who dealt with higher adult education administration have pointed to the same need. Clark (6) noted that adult education in colleges and universities tended to be marginal with a degree of goal ambiguity and operating pressure in an enrollment economy. He saw changes for the better linked with improvement in the career patterns and status of these administrators. Carey has stated:

> "The condition for greatest potential change might well be the establishment of a firm sense of profession among the administrative staffs of university adult units, a condition which at the present seems somewhat mirage-like... Recent signs of at least the beginnings of a development of professionalization in the field (were observed and viewed favorably)." (3:196,193).

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION PROCESS

The concept of "professionalization" has been used to refer to the dynamic process whereby certain crucial characteristics of an occupation can be observed to change in the direction of a profession. The basic elements of professionalization has been described in terms of the following three categories: (1) Acquisition of a specialized technique supported by a body of theory; (2) Development of a career supported by an association of colleagues; and (3) Establishment of community recognition of professional status (13:44). For both conceptual and operational purposes these three categories have been considered in the present study as the basic elements for analysis of occupational professionalization.

The Professional Model

Considerations of occupational professionalization typically have been focused around the professional model, consisting of both structural and attitudinal aspects. According to Hall, "Movement toward correspondence with the professional model is

the process of professionalization" (8:92). Measurement of such movement was specificiable through the use of structural and attitudinal scales, allowing for a quantifiable, operational definition of professionalization.

The structural side of the professional model has been examined by Wilensky (14), Caplow (2), and others, who have noted that occupations pass through a rather consistent sequence of stages on their way to becoming professions. This sequence is typically described in terms of some or all of the following states: (1) Creation of a full-time occupation; (2) Establishing a professional association; (3) Change of name; (4) The development and promulgation of a code of ethics; (5) A prolonged political agitation to obtain the support of the public power for the maintenance of the new occupational barriers; (6) the development of training facilities directly or indirectly controlled by the professional society. In the present study measurement of movement in the structural aspects of the professional model was through the use of background scales.

The attitudinal attributes of the professionalization model reflect the manner in which the practitioners view their work. Hall's "Professionalization Scales" (8:92), which were developed to assess attitudinal components of professionalization in occupations, were utilized to measure change over time in relation to attitudinal aspects of the professional model. It was assumed that there is some correspondence between attitude changes and structural changes toward the professional model.

Hypothesis

The major hypothesis of this study was: The chief administrative officers of higher adult education who respond to the questionnaire will have on the average a greater degree of professionalization in 1962 than in 1957 and in 1967 than in 1962.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A retrospective approach was selected for this study which permitted an initial exploratory study to be undertaken of change over time in the extent of professionalization of the

administrators. The advantages of being able to do an exploratory study seemed to outweigh the inherent problems of a retrospective study, including the limitations connected with recall.

Treatment of Data

To assess change over time between groups (1957,1962,and 1967), Analysis of Variance was used with scores from the utilized to assess the extent of change over time between groups in relation to Background Scales scores.

SAMPLE

The population for this study consisted of chief administrative officers (vice-presidents, deans, directors, or the equivalents) of higher adult education administrators to whom the questionnaire was mailed. Each respondent was classified within only one year or combination of years during which he held office to allow the use of standard statistical procedures for data analysis. As a result of this classification, data from 29 of the administrators were used for hypothesis testing. Data from all 93 respondents were utilized in supplemental analyses.

Instrument

The questionnaire used in this project consisted of two parts. The first part utilized Hall's Professionalization Scales[1] to measure the professional model attitudinal components listed in Table 1.

The Background Scales were designed to measure structural components of the professional model listed in Table 2.

FINDINGS

Each of the 12 variables related to the Professionalization Scales and the Background Scales were analyzed in relation to extent of professionalization. The .05 significance level was employed throughout the study. The results of the tests are presented in Tables 1 and 2 and indicate that: (1) None of the F

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insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

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ratios derived from the Analysis of Variance of the Professionalization Scales data were significant; and (2) None of the Chi-Square tests on the Background Scales data were significant. Both

these tests failed to indicate any major change over time between groups tested, although the change that did occur was in the expected direction.

Supplementary Analyses

Supplementary comparison of data received from all respondents (N = 93) with data from the segment used in hypothesis testing (N = 29) gave even less indication of movement in terms of professionalization between the three groups (1957,1962 and 1967), than was found in the primary analysis of data.

As a further check, a supplementary questionnaire was sent to a randomly selected group[2] of non-respondents to the initial questionnaire. Using these supplementary findings, additional analyses were made which compared data from respondents and non-respondents in terms of year of entry into the field, geographic location and size of enrollment of program administered. These analyses also showed no significant difference between the two groups.

Professionalization Scores

When Hall (7:25-26) used the Professionalization Scales to measure the extent of professionalization in a variety of occupations (accountants, advertising executives, engineers, lawyers, librarians, nurses, personnel managers, physicians, social workers, stock brokers and teachers), he reported finding average scores which ranged from 15.0- 32.7 for the 5 variables tested. Very few average scores presented by Hall were as high as 30.0 whereas in the present study the average scores ranged from 29.4- 40.4. It is interesting to note that attitudinally, the higher adult education administrators' scores from the present study, on the average, exceeded those of lawyers, physicians and other occupations measured by Hall. However, these relatively high scores on the attitudinal scales for higher education administrators were not paralleled by a commensurately high degree of professionalization in terms of its structural attributes. According to the data from the Background Scales, the majority of respondents held an advanced degree which was

less than a doctorate; had a title of director or associate dean; had few or no publications in the field of adult education; and came from fields other than adult education. They indicated, however, a relatively high degree of involvement in adult education professional associations.

DISCUSSION

Relating Findings to Past Research

During the past decade, discussion in the field of higher adult education administration has pointed to the need for further professionalization of the occupation. Based on his research, Carey (3:193) in 1961 anticipated the development of professionalization in the field. Findings in the present study failed to indicate that such a development took place.

This occupation appears to have become highly professionalized attitudinally by 1957. Having reached a relatively high plateau in terms of attitudinal attributes, the occupation seems to have maintained this level between 1957 and 1967. At the same time, the occupation appears not to have achieved a high level

of professionalization structurally before 1957 nor to have significantly changed in this aspect during the period examined. Such findings support Hall's conclusion (7:19) that attitudinal and structural variables do not necessarily vary together. This can particularly be the case, as Hall found, with occupations, such as teaching and social work, which have been traditionally relatively high in terms of service but not in terms of the more structural attributes of professionalization. Higher adult education administration appears to have followed such a pattern.

Between 1957 and 1967 a number of events in the field of higher adult education occurred which might have combined to facilitate and even push forward the professionalization process in the occupation. Commenting on significant developments in higher adult education in the United States of America during this period, Liveright and Goldman (12) pointed out that a new climate and milieu were developing for the field. Higher adult education was receiving wider acceptance and increased support,

particularly from government sources such as Title I of the Higher Education Act and the Economic Opportunities Act. Regional associations were becoming more active in the field. New and innovative programs were being developed. There was a rapid increase in enrollment in higher adult education programs between 1957 and 1967. While the field of higher adult education expanded and diversified during this period, it would seem that program growth and diversification led to greater time demands and administrative responsibilities on the part of the administrators rather than increased professionalization.

There were losses as well as gains, however, in the field during this period. Such losses may well have inhibited the professionalization process. According to Liveright (11), in some universities there was the complete abolition of credit work in the higher adult education division. With the termination of the Fund for Adult Education, there was a marked

in foundation funding for the field. The administrators studied had a wide variety of training and professional experience before entering the occupation. In addition, their status in the university reflected the low priority generally allocated to programs providing service in the university.

Within the framework of these situational factors, the occupation studied seems not to have changed significantly either automatically or as the result of the effort of those in the field in terms of professionalization. The finding in the present study of lack of change over time was attributed, at least in part, to such situational factors. These factors were viewed as having neutralized the professionalization process in the occupation and as having been, for the most part, beyond the control of those in the occupation.

Clark (6) arrived at a similar conclusion based upon his study of an adult education system which operated in a marginal situation (related both to a parent institution and to the community) similar to that in which higher adult education operates.

He observed that, while the administrators theoretically had the ability in the long run to modify the conditions in which they made decisions, in the here and now of administrative decisions, the administrators and their decisions tended to be conditioned by outside forces beyond their control.

Based on the high professionalization scores on the attitudinal variables found in this study for 1957, 1962 and 1967 cohorts, it would appear that there was strong motivation among those in the occupation to work for further professionalization or at least to seek to raise a low prestige position within their institutions. But high motivation can lead to increased frustration rather than to progress in occupational professionalization if factors which limit the professionalization process are powerful enough. It would seem that very great concerted efforts and extremely effective conversion of attitude into action would have been necessary for those in the occupation to have significantly improved their corporate lot in relation to corporate status.

Utilizing the Professional Model

An occupation can be viewed in the light of the professionalization model in terms of: (1) the extent of professionalization already acquired; (2) that which it is currently in the process of acquiring; and (3) those aspects of the professionalization process which members of the occupation neither have nor are presently in the process of acquiring.

Based upon the literature about the occupation and upon findings from the present study, in terms of the professional model, higher adult education administration has already acquired the following attributes: (1) It has been created as a full-time occupation; (2) Not only one but two major professional associations have been established in the occupation; (3) Graduate degree programs which are designed to train higher adult education administrators have been established in connection with a number of major universities; (4) A relatively high degree of professionalization attitudinally has been attained by those in the occupation.

The occupation appears to be in the process of further professionalization in relation to the following attributes: (1) Some significant steps have been and are being taken in acquiring a specialized technique supported by a body of theory in relation to higher adult education administration as well as to adult education as a whole; (2) Pleas for the change of the name of the occupation have been expressed; (3) There is some evidence of the emergence of a career supported by an association of colleagues. Nevertheless, few chief administrative officers in 1957, 1962 or 1967 attained office through a career route exclusively in the occupation. Most were trained primarily in other fields and came into the occupation later in their careers. But even so, it seems that their careers in higher adult education administration are considerably supported by one or more associations of colleagues.

There is no indication of the presence of or of attempts to formulate a code of ethics for the occupation. Despite considerable service to the public, the occupation seems to have been relatively

unsuccessful in establishing the type of university or community recognition of professional status which is held by the more highly professionalized occupations. Further professionalization in relation to the other attributes of the model may well have been curtailed in the past and may continue to be delayed until there is increased recognition of the occupation by the university and the community.

Implications for the Occupation

While situational factors outside the control of those in an occupation may inhibit the professionalization process of the occupation corporately, individuals in the occupation may not be similarly constrained in their own professionalization.

Some chief administrative officers of higher adult education may transcend the problems of marginality along with their divisions. Carey (3), placing adult divisions on a growth continuum, found that divisions typically move through the following stages in the growth cycle: (1) Departmental domination; (2) Autonomous development; (3) Integration; and (4) Assimilation. As the adult

division moves toward assimilation, the division and its chief administrator increasingly gains university acceptance. Carey, however, found only 13% of the adult divisions he studies and their chief administrative officers to be at the assimilation stage. What of the other 87% functioning in more marginal situations?

According to Vollmer and Mills many professionals apparently learn to live in complex organizations in less than ideal circumstances. Some resist the system. Others adapt to the system by becoming less professional and more bureaucratic. But there are other mechanisms that permit professionals to live in more or less bureaucratic environments "and yet retain their integrity and independence" (13:275-6). One of these is federated professionalism. Federated professionalism has benefited professionals in universities. In examining the university setting Clark found that status was achieved by professionals not only from their formal assignments in the university but also from their standing in a discipline.

Clark states:

> "The following principle obtains: A direct relation of faculty members to external sources of support affects the distribution of influence within the campus, redistributing influence from those who do not have such contacts to those who do, and moving power from the faculty as a whole and as smaller collectives to individual professors" (13:289).

This principle would seem to apply to higher adult educators as well as to other academicians. A next step, corporately and individually, for further professionalization for those in the occupation may be through a process like federated professionalism. A significant change in the structural attributes of the occupation would seem to call for concerted efforts to strengthen the field of higher adult education as a discipline and for increasingly strong and active professional association to serve as power bases for the occupation as a whole for all who seek

further professionalization even in marginal situations. Such associations could increasingly assist professionals in the field through better dissemination of innovations in the field and through working for better utilization of professional knowledge already available. The associations might eventually move in the direction of establishing and seeking to maintain some type of minimal standards of professional behavior and entrance standards for the field. Such an association could seek to identify and put into practice more objective and adequate ways of permitting professionals to judge each other's competency. Perhaps a broader approach to professionalization is required than higher adult education on its own can make. Efforts to bring about further professionalization of the occupation may need to be undertaken jointly with those in other sub-fields of adult education.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hall (7:9) reported that "the reliability of each scale was tested by the split-half method with the Spearman-Brown correction formula. All scales attained a reliability of .80 or higher on the pre-test data. The validity of the scales appeared to be relatively high on the basis of the fact validity of the items and on the responses of the pre-test groups."

2. Supplemental questionnaires were mailed to 40 Ss of whom 26 responded.

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Professionalization Scores for Change Over Time Between 1957, 1962 and 1967 Groups

Variable	Degrees of Freedom	F	P exact probability
Professional Organization as Reference	2,46	1.94	.15
Belief in Service to the Public	2,46	2.95	.06
Belief in Self Regulation	2,46	.59	.56
Sense of Calling to Field	2,46	1.92	.16
Feeling of Autonomy	2,46	1.63	.21
Average of Variables	2,46	.90	.59

F=3.20 (Significant at .05 level)

Table 2

Chi Square Analysis of Background Scales Scores for Change Over Time Between 1957, 1962 and 1967 Groups

Variable	Degrees of Freedom	X^2	$X^2_{.975}$	$X^2_{.025}$	P
Title	4	1.99	11.1	.48	n.s.
Education	4	1.35	11.1	.48	n.s.
Publication	6	8.16	14.4	1.24	n.s.
Experience	6	3.37	14.4	1.24	n.s.
Association	6	2.39	14.4	1.24	n.s.
Program	4	7.58	11.1	.48	n.s.

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